

CHANGING LIVES

FORT COLLINS RESCUE MISSION & HARVEST FARM

A Plate of Purpose



**FORT
COLLINS
RESCUE
MISSION**



Dear Friends,

One of my favorite parts of the Christmas story involves the shepherds, who we often think of as children in a school or church nativity play. But the shepherds were closer to outcasts than cute little children. Being a shepherd was one of the lowest positions a person could have, and they were not considered to be of much value.

God could have sent his angels to anyone to announce the arrival of Jesus, but He chose the shepherds. The shepherds rushed to go see Jesus, and after, they went everywhere to tell people about the birth of Jesus. They were the first human messengers of the good news!

While we celebrate the good news of Jesus with our guests at the Mission, I can honestly say I have learned more about faith from our guests than I could have ever shared. When one guest I knew well was asked during a TV interview, "What would you say to others who may be struggling in the same way you have?" he answered, "Give Jesus a chance, it will stick!" Like the shepherds, this guest proclaimed the good news about Jesus.

Thank you for all you do to make our ministry possible! We could not do this without you!

Merry Christmas!

Dennis Van Kampen

Dennis Van Kampen | President/CEO

A Plate of Purpose



A meal provides nourishment for our guests and participants at the Mission and Harvest Farm, but even more, it helps build a sense of community and purpose to help on the pathway out of homelessness.

The Making of a Meal

Donate

Food prices have increased. Our chefs rely on donors to give financially and to donate much-needed ingredients. And thanks to community partners like Food Bank of Larimer County, we are able to prepare breakfast, lunch (only at the Farm) and dinner every single day.

Prepare

Each day our chefs work together to prepare the meals, starting their day at 4 a.m. They look at the ingredients available to them across the Mission's facilities—including in Denver and the Farm's greenhouse—to provide nourishing meals and prevent food waste.

Serve

Each meal is served by volunteers at the Mission and New Life Program (NLP) participants whose work readiness is in the kitchen at Harvest Farm.

"The kitchen was the best thing that happened to me because you work hard, and you get to help others."

-Andrew
NLP Graduate

The Meaning of a Meal

"It means everything. I've had guys tell me that the meal made them feel like they were home again." -Rica, Fort Collins Rescue Mission

Every day, but especially during the holidays, something special happens when we see our guests share a meal. The best way Chef Rica Blanc describes it is, **"like a parent who's thrilled to watch their child get the Christmas present they want."**

"It's kind of the same thing," she said, "because you know that these guys are not spending Christmas out on the street in potential snow or freezing."

That's the power of a meal—it invites people in, someone who may be feeling lonely, hungry, cold, and hopeless. That's why each of our chefs pour their heart into every meal they make, all year long.

"We don't know what they went through that day. We don't know if they've eaten at all or eaten out of a dumpster," Rica said. "So being able to provide a hot meal means everything."

"To the guys who make the food, it's a sense of accomplishment. For the guys in the cafeteria, they're very grateful." -Ryan, Harvest Farm

Fifteen to 20 New Life Program participants at a time work in the kitchen for their work readiness, where they come up with, create and share meals alongside others in the program.

Another northern Colorado chef said that making or sharing a meal is a significant part of recovery. "When you're standing there chopping onions next to somebody, they open up. They can vent and be among people who aren't going to make them feel judged," he said. "The camaraderie of sharing a meal opens a lot of doors."

Chef Ryan Hamilton added, "It's a sense of being accepted because everyone here has walked a very similar path."

Cooking meals gives many participants a reason to be proud of themselves, and for our chefs, it goes beyond simple nourishment. One program participant even got emotional while making muffins and cupcakes.

"He started tearing up because he had never done anything like that before," Ryan said. "My favorite part about this job is the men I get to cook with, the men I get to feed. That is what keeps me looking forward to coming to work every single day."



A Christmas Blessing

"Last year, we had an amazing donor who got me \$3,000 worth of prime rib that I could serve for Christmas. I can't even put into words how great it was to see these guys having a meal like that." -Rica



95%

Zero Waste KITCHEN

This is the goal we are working towards by composting everything except meat, coffee grinds and eggshells to then use to help feed pigs and other animals at Harvest Farm.

Christmas Day at the Farm

New Life Program participants and many of their families come to the Farm on Christmas day to enjoy a special meal together.

"Seeing the men who may not have had the best holidays in the past, and their families come, and they all sit down and share a meal—it's an amazing experience. It's just smiles all around the room." -Ryan

Scan to Give!



This Christmas, your generosity can make the biggest difference for those who are hungry, lonely and seeking purpose. Donate today at FortCollinsRescueMission.org/ChangingLives

THE MISSION in my words



Don & Henrietta Gilmore

Don and Henrietta have been volunteering at Fort Collins Rescue Mission for about a year, and Don recently became a mentor through the New Life Program at Harvest Farm.

Why is it important to help those in need during the holidays?

My heart always goes out to them. Especially around the holidays, the feeling of loneliness can be heightened. There's such a need for this help, and around the holidays, they should be able to enjoy them just like anybody else. The least we could do is feed them and provide shelter.

What encourages you to keep serving meals at the Mission?

It has been very rewarding from a personal standpoint for both of us. The guys always thank us for the meal. It's a very warm environment and a safe place for them. It's like reaching down and grabbing that hand that's

reaching up asking for help. What's also inspiring are the chefs and their stories. They all worked in commercial kitchens, and this was something they felt was much more worthwhile.

What has your experience been like as a mentor?

It's very positive. My mentee is fully committed, and we've had several discussions. I'm not a family member to him, I'm not part of the staff and he has a good case worker, so I'm just there to prod him to think about certain things. When a participant graduates, they're sober, they have employment, they have housing, they have community, they get a car. They have a foundation to move forward with their life. It's just a very, very impressive program.



This winter, we are encouraging donations of:

- Coats
- Gloves
- Winter boots
- Thermal underwear
- Socks
- Beanies and long scarves
- Hand and toe warmers

For more details go to FortCollinsRescueMission.org/WarmAHeart

OUR CORE STRATEGIES

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable

REHABILITATION

Equipping men through a life-changing program

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS

Transitioning people into stability

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Providing essential needs for daily life



Volunteer With Us!



LOCATIONS Fort Collins Rescue Mission | Harvest Farm | Denver Rescue Mission

DENVER RESCUE MISSION IS A PROUD MEMBER OF:



316 Jefferson Street | Fort Collins, CO 80524
970.224.4302

